

NEC BRIEFING

26 March 1958

1-21-80
THE OUTLOOK FOR GENERAL DE GAULLE

25X1

- I. There has been an increase in speculation on a possible return of De Gaulle.
- II. Gaillard government will probably be able to avoid last-minute crisis before beginning the month-long Easter and local-election recess which starts tomorrow.
 - A. Friction within the government coalition will be aggravated, however, by labor pressure on Socialists and by Independent demands for strong measures in North Africa.
 - B. Absence of a likely immediate successor sustains Gaillard.
 1. Fear of return of De Gaulle adds to reluctance of party leaders to overthrow government.
- III. Speculation in France on possible return of De Gaulle is more prevalent than at any time since he retired from active political life in 1954.
 - A. Many responsible political leaders profess to believe his return inevitable. (Socialist Commin, Independent Duchet).
 - B. Some business and military interests are reported increasingly in favor of his return.
- IV. Reports are in conflict on De Gaulle's intentions and on his physical condition.
 - A. Speculation is unchecked because he keeps his own counsel.
 - B. He is devoting his main effort to finishing memoirs, but
 - C. His interest in current problems is evident in heavy schedule of interviews he maintains.

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- D. At 67, he is in better health than he was two years ago, before he was operated on for cataracts.
- V. His return unlikely without drastic worsening of political situation.
 - A. Prolonged cabinet crisis accompanied by public demonstrations might induce assembly to accept his terms.
 - 1. He insists he would accept power only if recalled with accord of assembly which would have to relinquish its authority for period of two or three years.
 - B. Even if assembly displays its usual indecision in finding a new premier when Gaillard falls, a major obstacle to wide assembly and public support for De Gaulle lies in the conflicting hopes of many who are now urging his recall.
 - 1. Many who now profess to be Gaullists would probably be disillusioned by his liberal views on North Africa or by his reported willingness to seek accommodation with Moscow.

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